

the Attic

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A cook's fish-bellied friend.

Fish Bellies

The above photograph shows my favourite cooking knife. It is an excellent all-rounder. The carbon-steel blade gets stained with use (don't we all?) but it takes a very sharp edge and stays sharp. The fish-belly curve facilitates the fine chopping of herbs and garlic. The rounded wood handle provides a secure and comfortable grip. And all this curving and roundness makes for a beautiful form. The knife is manufactured by the Pallarès company in Solsona, Catalunya. Cost me 7 euros from a kitchen shop in Girona. I have more than one of these knives. Not because I really need more than one but because I like opening my knife drawer and seeing the lovely fish-bellies all in a row.

Guangzhou Duck

In the first issue of *the Attic* there was the tale of Mrs Duck of Palmerston North, N.Z. Hardly had that story gone to press than yet more duck rescuing tales came in.

In Spokane, Washington, which is in America, a nice man by the name of Joel Armstrong rescued some ducklings from a ledge. Having successfully

returned the babies to their anxious mother, he led the feathered family to a pond in the nearby city park.

And, from the same continent, but this time Washington D.C., Ms Suzanne Pope, who saw a mother duck squawking in distress above a storm drain. Ms Pope called the police, repeatedly, until help was sent. Four ducklings were rescued on this occasion.

Right here in Cologne I have obtained a dramatic eyewitness account of drivers braking to avoid a family of ducks crossing Erftstraße. "There was some dangerous swerving going on there," the witness said. When you consider that these were German car drivers, who are best known for their love of the accelerator pedal and who think nothing of forcing a fellow driver off the autobahn, this is quite remarkable.

In Guangzhou, China, a few months back, a Mr Lai Jiansheng climbed a steel bridge to assist a would-be suicide. The police were already on the scene but the intrepid Mr Lai removed his shoes, clambered up the truss and sat next to the jumper. And promptly tipped him off his perch. An act of good citizenship in Mr Lai's opinion. The unwilling jumper survived (with injuries to his spine) and Mr Lai became a YouTube star.

Mr Lai would know exactly what to do with suicidal ducks. I'll bring the noodles.

Windmills

I don't want a windmill in my backyard, do you? They spoil the view and you need hundreds of them just to light one 60 watt bulb. That is when they work. Have you noticed when you see them they hardly ever seem to be turning? And when they do turn they kill birds and then the blades drop off. And they're subsidised for goodness sake. What kind of capitalism is that? Nookla power has subsidies too, but those are the good subsidies, like the ones the coal industry gets. This money goes to sensible business people, not a bunch of muesli-munching, cardigan-knitting Luddites. These people make me sick. Don't they know we owe everything to oil, coal and uranium? Global warming? A big So What, people. Hell, I hate the cold; a few degrees warmer sounds great to me. They say the Greenland glaciers are melting fast. They say this means London, New York City, Bangladesh and some atolls in the Pacific nobody has ever heard of will soon be underwater. Like it matters! Really, people can be sooo stupid. The



Not in my backyard.

answer is ridiculously simple: We build new cities on higher ground. That means jobs, lots of jobs, especially for architects. And anyway, New York is a rat-infested shit-hole; drowning is the best thing that could happen to it. As for London, we'll just move the best bits to Luton (the place already has an airport). If it was no problem to move London Bridge to the Arizona desert it will be a breeze shifting Buckingham Palace, the Tower and Big Ben a few miles up the road. We can leave the Houses of Parliament; in the new world order there won't be any need for hot-air factories. Bangladesh? Well, a few million peasants getting a good bath is not exactly going to ruin my day. It's not like I know any of them. And what is all this whinging about waste products? Coal-fired power stations will get scrubbers that will collect the carbon dioxide. Personally, I can't see the point, but if it will keep those damn Mueslis quiet I guess it'll be worth it. We can store the stuff in the same hole in the ground where we keep the plutonium we don't need for bombs. That's a twofer, folks. I keep hearing rabid reports about how the planet is in danger. Get... a... grip, people. Our planet is no danger whatsoever. Sure, in about 5 billion years, when the sun explodes, we'll have something to worry about but until then we can breath easy. As for me, I'm off for a spin in my Humvee. I've got some windmills to tilt at.

Nacolib

Those who follow US politics (so much more colourful than *die Politik* here in Germany) will have enjoyed the spectacle

of the so-called Town-hallers and Birthers yelling and screaming and poster at rallies and marches across the country. A phenomenon that started some three seconds after President Obama was inaugurated. These protesting people are railing against the Nazi-commie liberals in the government, in the schools and under their beds that are "destroying America". When asked to explain the multiple contradictions of a liberal being a Nazi and a communist they say, It don't matter none, they're all the same. Buncha devil-worshippin' America-hatin' traitors.

So, knowing the importance of labels, I have coined a neologism: Nacolib. It sounds like either a Central American guerilla organisation (Viva Nacolib!) or a word to describe the condition of your lip after you've rubbed it with cocaine.

In fact, it is my contribution to these heated town-hall meetings. Some of the heated signs there have been getting wildly verbose with adjectives; Nazi-commie-muslim-faggot-watermelon-Volvo-latte liberal takes a big poster. Like one of those PowerPoint presentations with a hundred bullet points, it's too much for the average brain. Nacolib will cover it all. You favour gay marriage? Nacolib. You say Saddam wasn't behind 9/11? Nacolib. Like French wine? Nacolib. Against waterboarding? Well, you get the idea. This word is your one-stop shop for everything you don't like about liberals.

And remember guys, a good poster is pithy. It can be scanned and understood in an instant. NACOLIBS SUCK! Now that's a message.

Kiwi Fruit

In the city of Hamilton, New Zealand, a small boy was recently savaged by a large dog. The lad spent three nights in Waikato Hospital having his face put back together.

It appeared to be curtains for the dog until witnesses came forward to testify that they had seen the child squeezing Fido's testicles shortly before the attack. It turned out that the boy had a backstory involving incidents of cruelty to animals.

As a result of this information Hamilton City Council deemed the dog to have acted in self-defence and it was therefore not destroyed.

I can say that should anybody get it into their head to squeeze my testicles, I would probably turn vicious too. But, the big question this news item left me with was, where did that little boy learn the scientific application of pain? Did somebody demonstrate this to him, or had he been experimenting on the neighbourhood pets?

There is an old expression for something that is obvious: To be as clear as a dog's balls. Was it this obviousness that inspired our young scientist to investigate the results of yanking on canine Kiwi fruit? In any event he seems to have found the experiments worthwhile, or he did until his victim demonstrated an alternative outcome to pulling on other people's nuts.

There is a parable in this. Maybe something to do with the Middle East.

And...

On our last visit to New York, not long before Lehman's went down the drain, we went to a restaurant near the Bowery called Peasant which was full of ladies wearing Stella McCartney outfits. This year we hope to get a table at the latest eatery in town, Mea Culpa Manhattan, which is rumoured to be full of ladies wearing sack cloth and ashes.

Stop the press! ...Ah, it seems the ladies and their well togged escorts have got those '09 bonuses after all. Stella can relax. Mea culpa is so last season.



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